

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMCONSUL TORONTO
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

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E.O. N/A
TAGS: ECON, CA
SUBJECT: FURTHER MEDIA REACTION TO TRUDEAU'S NEW YORK
SPEECH

REF: OTTAWA 1466

1. SUMMARY. WEEKEND COMMENT BY CANADIAN MEDIA ON PRIME
MINISTER TRUDEAU'S SPEECH MARCH 22 IN NEW YORK MOSTLY
EMPHASIZED THEME THAT CANADIAN ECONOMY WAS FAR WEAKER THAN
PORTRAYED AND EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS RE PRIME MINISTER'S
"CONVERSION" TO GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT AND FREE ENTERPRISE.
END SUMMARY.

2. SKEPTICAL REACTION IN CANADA TO PRIME MINISTER'S
MARCH 22 SPEECH SUMMARIZED IN MARCH 24 EDITORIAL BY TORONTO
GLOBE AND MAIL. EDITORIAL PRAISED IDEAS EXPRESSED IN
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SPEECH, BUT CHARACTERIZED THEM AS "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS,"
SINCE IN FACT TRUDEAU'S GOVERNMENT WAS DOING LITTLE ABOUT
PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SUCH AS INFLATION. GOC DE-
SCRIBED AS PUTTING UP NO ADEQUATE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION,
NOT EVEN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ONE. IT NOTED THAT WAGE AND
PRICE MONITORING AFTER LIFTING OF CONTROLS WAS BEING GIVEN
TO A "RELUCTANT AND TOOTHLESS" ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF CANADA,

THAT FEDERAL DEFICITS WERE LARGE AND GROWING, AND THAT THERE WERE NO PLANS TO PRESENT A FEDERAL BUDGET SOON.

3. CHARLES LUNCH IN OTTAWA CITIZEN, AMONG OTHERS, COMMENTED ON PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENTS ON NEED FOR PUBLIC SECTOR AND PURSUIT OF SOCIAL EQUITY CAN LEAD TO LOSSES IN ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY. LYNCH SAID TRUDEAU WAS PREACHING BIG GOVERNMENT AND THE FAILURE OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ONLY TWO YEARS AGO, AND HE WONDERED WHETHER PEOPLE WILL NOW BELIEVE IN TRUDEAU'S CONVERSION.

3. MOST COMMENT ALSO TOUCHED ON WARM RECEPTION GIVEN PRIME MINISTER BY HIS AMERICAN AUDIENCE. RICHARD GWYN TERMED NEW YORK RECEPTION AS "ECSTATIC" AND ADDED THAT THERE WAS NOTICEABLE GOOD WILL AMONG AUDIENCE TOWARDS CANADA AND DESIRE TO SEE CANADA REMAIN UNITED. EDITORIAL IN MONTREAL LE DEVOIR QUOTED AMERICAN BANKER IN AUDIENCE AS SAYING, "AMERICANS BELIEVE IN CANADA. THEY WANT IT UNITED AND PROSPEROUS...MR. TRUDEAU TOLD THEM PRECISELY THOSE TWO THINGS, THAT THE COUNTRY WILL REMAIN UNITED AND PROSPEROUS. SO NATURALLY THEY LOVED THE SPEECH."

4. PRESS COMMENT ALSO CONTINUED THEMES THAT TRUDEAU OFFERED NO NEW SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT PROBLEMS AND WAS GUILTY OF PLAYING WITH STATISTICS. GEOFFREY STEVENS IN THE TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL SAID THAT DESPITE ROSY NUMBERS UNCLASSIFIED

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QUOTED BY TRUDEAU SHOWING THAT CANADA HAD GROWN FASTER THAN THE U.S. BY SEVERAL MEASURES OVER DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS, PRODUCTIVITY IN CANADA HAD GROWN LESS THAN ONE PERCENT PER YEAR IN THE PERIOD 1972-76 AND HAD ACTUALLY DECLINED IN 1977, WHILE THE DEMAND FOR JOBS AND UNEMPLOYMENT HAD INCREASED OVER THE PAST YEAR. THIS HE SAID WAS "MAKING PROGRESS BACKWARD."

5. COMMENT. SKEPTICISM OVER TRUDEAU'S PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY AND QUESTIONING OF GOC CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICY STANCE ARE OF PARTICULAR POPULAR CONCERN IN THIS PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. TO REMOVE ANY DOUBT, PC OPPOSITION LEADER JOE CLARK WAS QUOTED OVER THE WEEKEND AS SAYING THE ECONOMY, NOT NATIONAL UNITY, WOULD BE THE MAIN ISSUE IN ELECTIONS EXPECTED THIS SPRING. PLACKE

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